GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1543
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2015
Depletion of Ground Water
Tharoor Dr. Shashi

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether unrestricted riverbed/sand mining has led to the depletion of ground water resources and has also adversely affected the marine-ecosystem of rivers including rivers in the State of Kerala such as Neyyar, Vamanapuram and Kallada;
(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted a survey/study for assessing the detrimental impact caused by illegal and exploitative mining activities on these riverbeds;
(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
(d) whether the Government has issued additional guidelines, under the Sustainable Sand and Minor Mineral Mining guidelines, to establish round-the-clock complaints cell, conduct awareness workshops and institute, State-wise Monitoring Centres with participation from the local community to curb illegal mining; and
(e) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a), (b) and (c):The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has not conducted any study for assessing the detrimental impact caused by illegal and exploitative mining activities in the riverbeds of Neyyar, Vamanapuram and Kallada in the State of Kerala.State Governments regulate grant of mining leases and other concessions in respect of all minor minerals including Sand.The enforcement of sand mining leases, controlling and abating illegal sand mining is largely vested with the State Governments.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 which deals with the process to grant Environmental Clearance. The projects of mining of minerals including sand require prior environmental clearance. As per EIA Notification 2006, all the Project Proponents including sand mining projects needs to prepare a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment/Environmental Management Plan for obtaining Environmental Clearance. While according environmental clearance, the Expert Appraisal Committee stipulates necessary conditions for safeguarding the environment. The status of compliance of stipulated conditions of the environmental clearances of different projects, including sand mining projects, is monitored by ten Regional Offices of this Ministry in the Country.

(d) and (e): The Ministry has formulated Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines in September, 2015. The Guidelines, inter-alia, emphasizes on monitoring plans to evaluate the long-term effect of the mining activities both upstream and downstream of sand extraction sites and streamlining the process of impact assessment, environment management plan and environmental clearance in cluster situation. The Guidelines, inter-alia, also emphasises standard environmental conditions for sand mining viz. Stakeholder Engagement; Sustainable Mining Practices; Identification and Preparation of Mining Site; Monitoring the Mining of Mineral and its Transportation; Noise Management; Air Pollution and Dust Management; Management of Visual Impact; Bio-Diversity Protection; Management of Instability and Erosion; Waste Management; Pollution Prevention; Protection of Infrastructure; Enhancement of Road Safety; Closure and Reclamation of Mined Out Area; Health and Safety; Monitoring the Impact of Mining; and Mineral Conservation.
***